

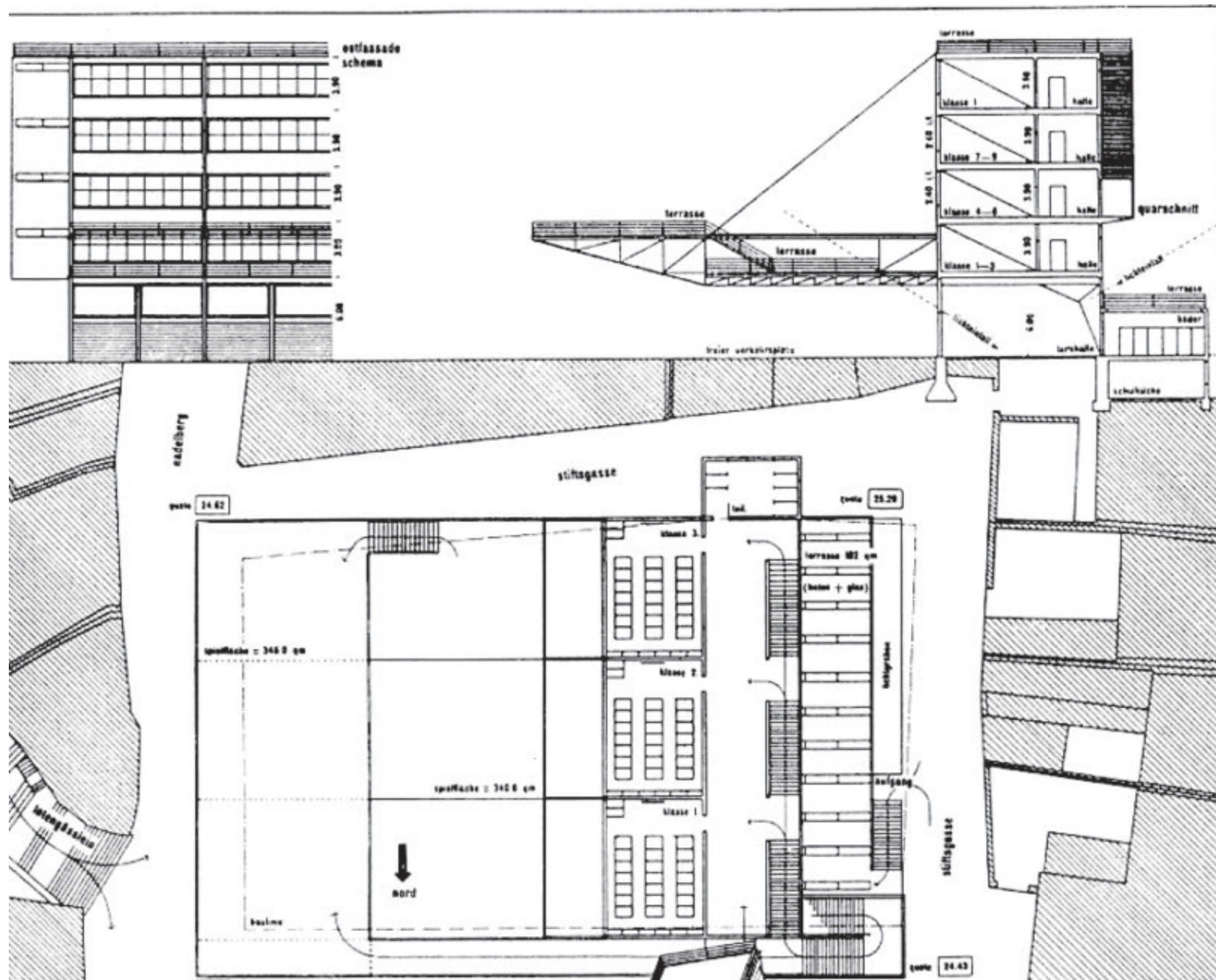
The Basel Petersschule was a design for a girl's school in the historic part of the city of Basel. Although never built the project is well known and has been researched extensively due to its evocative drawings, of which only a few exist, because of the building's response to program and site, and because of the unique architectural theory that Hans Meyer, the architect, used for the design for his building and also employed when he was the head of the Bauhaus architecture program between 1928 and 1930.

The program called for an all girl's school in the historic center of Basel, consisting of 11 classrooms, an art room, a gymnasium, a cafeteria and a playground. Mayer realized that by constructing everything on one level left little room for the playground and instead turned to a vertical scenario. All the classrooms and sports facilities were in the solid box. The vertical circulation climbed up the side of the building and the playground extended out of the building on a suspended platform. This diagram of three clear pieces expresses Mayer's need that children be located up out of the city in a safe environment and his idea of complete functionalism. Mayer believed buildings should be all function and that form was unimportant, and instead by a rigor in functional planning and analysis of social situations buildings could be designed to greatly benefit society.

The perspective and axonometric drawing are two of the few drawings shown in his presentation for the building. Both make the building look as if it resisting or defying gravity by exaggerating the suspended platform. The axonometric drawing further delves from reality by ignoring any of the site surroundings and focusing only on the building.

Basel Petersschule    Hans Meyer, Hans Wittwer    1926 (Unbuilt)





While not as famous or evocative as the perspective or axonometric drawing these drawings help bring a slight sense of reality to the Petersschule. On the plan the three parts of the building, the playground, the classroom core and the stairs are their own elements. By extending the playground platform so dramatically Meyer basically covered up the street below. The section drawing also shows how the building was meant to be three pieces. With Meyer's radical ideas on functionalism the building ultimately became a diagram and was radically edited. In later critiques on modernism and the design of the 1920s and 1930s the Petersschule has been highly criticized along with Meyer's principles. It has been argued that Meyer's lack of balance between form and function led to the building's failure.

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